



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Paul Eakins
Public Information Officer
213-257-2000
PEakins@da.lacounty.gov
Twitter: @LADAOOffice

Oct. 29, 2019

Three Sentenced for Running Sophisticated Real Estate Fraud Scheme

Three people have been sentenced for running a sophisticated real estate fraud scheme that resulted in the theft of more than \$1.4 million from 2014 to 2016, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Angela Grace Cotton, 47, was sentenced yesterday to 12 years in state prison after pleading no contest to three counts of identity theft, two counts of grand theft and one count each of forgery and money laundering, all felonies.

Denaysha Coleman, 27, was sentenced to three years and eight months in state prison after pleading no contest to one felony count each of grand theft and money laundering.

Lawrence Edward Cotton, 52, was sentenced to two years in state prison after pleading no contest to one felony count each of grand theft and money laundering.

All three defendants admitted allegations of fraud and embezzlement resulting in the loss of more than \$500,000.

They are required to pay more than \$1.4 million in restitution under the terms of a negotiated plea agreement.

A fourth defendant, Latrese Gevon Breau, 47, pleaded no contest on Feb. 14 to one felony count each of grand theft and identity theft, and she admitted an allegation of fraud and embezzlement.

She is expected to be sentenced to five years of formal probation and 106 days in county jail for time served on Dec. 4 in Department 50 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center. She also is required to complete 200 hours of community service under the terms of a plea agreement.

Deputy District Attorney Daniel Kinney of the White Collar Crime Division's Real Estate Fraud Section prosecuted case BA472018.

From July 2014 through September 2016, Angela Cotton, assisted by her co-defendants, used fictitious escrow and title companies that she had created to deceive a lending company into believing it was funding two legitimate real estate transactions.

The group stole the identities of nine people in order to facilitate the fictitious real estate sales. Along with the fake escrow and title companies, the defendants created a fictitious place of employment for one supposed homebuyer under whose name the two loans were approved, the prosecutor said.

To convince the lender of the legitimacy of the transactions and the entities involved, the defendants created fraudulent websites, emails and phone networks along with fake employment documentation and bank account statements from a non-existent financial institution for the borrower.

The lender transferred funds to a bank account it believed to be owned by a legitimate title company but was allegedly owned by one of the defendants.

The properties for which the defendants received loans were located in Los Angeles and La Cañada Flintridge and had not been listed for sale, the prosecutor added.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Fraud and Cyber Crimes Bureau.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.